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ABSTRACT

The paper first proposes a general model for the study of acculturation in the Chicano community and then presents developing trends which are viewed as important to understanding la raza. In generating a theory of acculturation a (+) or (-) value was assigned to each link (for example, lower, middle, or upper class family background) of the model. From the model, 5 possible types of acculturating individuals can be conceptualized-- the acculturated individual with no disadvantaged background, from the middle or upper class; the principal structural acculturator, who overcame a disadvantaged background mostly through education or through high motivation and hard work; the intervening acculturator, who is a member of the subordinate community and who has been acculturated through intervening media sources and is aware of a better tomorrow; the deviant acculturator, who is acculturated but shows no signs of positive influences; and the unacculturated individual, who is unacquainted with the superordinate culture--a person who is either a recent immigrant or who has led an isolated rural experience. Trends in understanding la raza include a cultural explanation of what many Anglos believe of Chicanos, a criticism of the focus upon acculturation which attacks the "melting pot" theory because many groups cannot assimilate, and Chicano nationalism--a developing trend in which there is a conscious attempt to restore the self image of Chicanos in the Southwest. While degrees of acculturation have occurred, assimilation has been a rare thing. If there is truly to be a defense of integration, there must first be a change in the inequities of the system. (FF)

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THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION IN CHICANO COMMUNITIES

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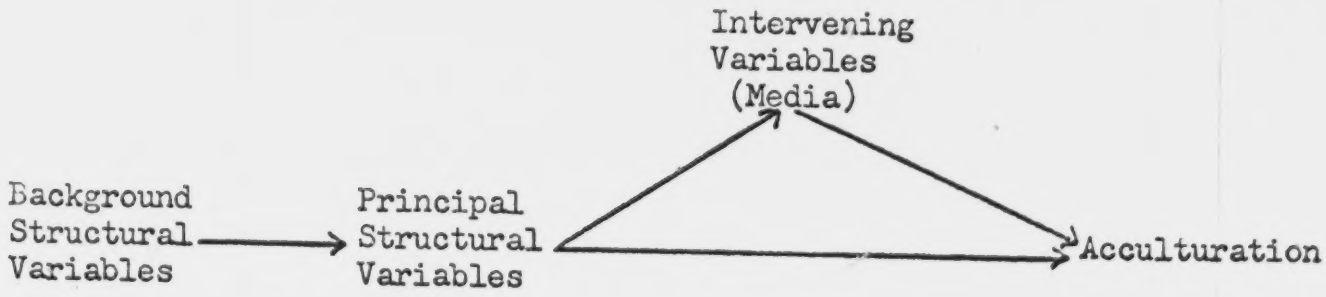
INTRODUCTION

To most Chicanos integration means acculturation. Though these two terms are not necessarily equated, we shall approach integration from this perspective in order to gain some comprehension of realities in the barrio. This paper shall first proceed to propose a general model for the study of acculturation in the Chicano community and thereafter shall present developing trends which are viewed as important to understanding la raza.

A general model for the study of acculturation is thus presented.(See Figure 1)

FIGURE 1

A Model for the Study of Acculturation
In Chicano Communities



A clarification of terms follows: (1) background structural variables are those structural variables which are indirectly related to acculturation and which act as positive or negative reinforcement to the principle structural variables; (2) principal structural variables are those central social structural variables which are directly related to acculturation and which are differentially allocated to minorities through major social institutions; (3) intervening variables have their derivation in media sources, and have an intervening effect which limits or facilitates acculturation.

To generate a theory of acculturation we assign a plus (+) or minus (-) value to each link in our model. A plus indicates that the designated variable has a positive acculturation value, e.g., middle or upper class family background; likewise a minus designates a negative acculturation value, e.g., lower class family background. Though intervening variables may have several types of positive effects, they are classed as a single positive effect which is either simple positive or compound positive. A simple positive effect is an intervening value whose source is a single media. If it is a compound positive effect, its positive value derives from several media. Whether a positive value can be assigned on an index of acculturation is determined by previous values in the causal chain. There is a cumulative principle in our theory. If the negative effects can be broken at any point in the causal chain, a process of interaction begins wherein change in one causal link will continuously be supported by reaction of the other link(s). In other words, the "primary positive link"[1] reinforces all other subsequent links, and once the negative chain is broken acculturation begins. Thus, five major possible types of acculturating individuals can be conceptualized. (See Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2

A Basic Typology

TYPES:	Background Structural Variables	Principal Structural Variables	Intervening Variables	Acculturation
1. The Acculturated	+	+	+	+
2. Principal Structural Acculturators	-	+	+	+
3. Intervening Acculturators	-	-	+	+
4. Deviant Acculturators	-	-	-	+
5. The Unacculturated	-	-	-	-

1. The Acculturated. The "totally" acculturated individual who has experienced a positive influence on all links in our model. More importantly, this individual did not have a disadvantaged background, and his acculturated status is directly related to a positive effect of background structural variables. This individual comes primarily from the middle or upper class; his parents are often in high stratification positions, e.g., doctors, lawyers, businessmen, high level bureaucrats, and politicians.

2. Principal Structural Acculturators. This type is represented by the individual who overcame a disadvantaged background by taking advantage of opportunities which opened up in major societal institutions. This would include the "self-made man" who essentially acculturated himself through motivation and hard work. Many of these individuals overcame their poverty backgrounds through education and can be found in professional occupations and in business firms.

3. Intervening Acculturators. An individual who neither had a positive background nor the structural opportunities in major societal institutions best exemplifies this type. For all practical purposes this individual is a member of the subordinate community, but he is different because he has been acculturated through intervening media sources. He can be considered as the community's latent change agent because he has a similar background though his attitudes and behavior are indicative of acculturation. This individual exemplifies a social consciousness which makes him highly political. He may be a car mechanic or a night watchman but he is more aware and has higher expectations for a better tomorrow.

4. Deviant Acculturators. Occasionally, one will find a subordinate group member who is acculturated though there are no signs of positive influences. However, this type is relatively rare and is likely to occur only by chance. Thus, we classify such an individual as a deviant case.

5. The Unacculturated. This is an individual who has had a totally negative background and ranks among the unacculturated on all major indices of acculturation. He is likely to be a recent immigrant who is unacquainted with the superordinate culture; he may also be someone who has led an isolated rural experience.

We have proposed a theory of acculturation, and we have suggested a basic typology for its study. Though we claim that the principal structural variables are the major links to acculturation, the negative chain can be broken at any point to generate a cumulative acculturation effect. Moreover, we contend that acculturation is not an either-or process but that it is a process wherein many degrees and types are evident.

THE CULTURAL EXPLANATION

It was once commonly thought by social scientists, and lay people, that Mexican Americans had actually never desired to acculturate. The early literature written for social service agencies[2] and the anthropological emphasis upon value orientations strongly contributed to a distorted view of Mexican Americans. However, many of these earlier views were highly simplistic, if not altogether inaccurate.

One view which has predominated in social science circles has been the "cultural explanation." This view essentially attributed all differences

to cultural characteristics. Though there are cultural differences between Anglos and Chicanos, they have become exaggerated and have even become causal explanations. It was strongly suggested that Mexican Americans remained unacculturated for generations because cultural characteristics and values were at odds with Anglo American characteristics and values.

A whole array of negative values which were summarized as "traditional societal values" were attributed to Mexican American culture while their dichotomous opposites, held to be characteristic of Anglo Americans, were viewed as more desirable and conducive to full acculturation in American society. Moreover, these supposedly cultural values were held to be causal effects for the Mexican American's low achievement in this society.

Let us take a case in point. Many Anglo researchers have noted that Chicanos have "a fierce pride in la raza." It is held that Mexican Americans value their identity and prefer to be with "their own kind." The internal cohesion found in el barrio is then used to explain a "resistive" attitude on the part of Mexican Americans to acculturation. Now, let us look at "a fierce pride in la raza" from another perspective. Any elementary sociology text informs us that Simmel was correct: conflict with out-groups increases internal cohesion. We can begin to understand the response (internal cohesion) of Chicanos to the American experience if we analyze their status in terms of conflict. Mexican Americans are a minority group in the Southwest. Conflict is present in the everyday life of the Chicano because he is constantly the object of discrimination and prejudice. Thus, "a fierce pride in la raza" becomes an ethnic response to the effect of

racism rather than the cause of an unacculturated status. If a low rate of acculturation exists among Mexican Americans, we must turn toward analyzing the differential treatment that this minority group experiences in order to access the barriers that exist and the consequences that they cause.

The "cultural explanation" of the unacculturated status of Mexican Americans has only begun to be challenged by Chicano intellectuals. As Mexican Americans increasingly gain access to institutions of higher education, a new breed of social scientists are emerging with new explanations. Though Dr. George I. Sanchez was a lone critic of the cultural explanation in the 40's and 50's, he is now being joined by young Chicano scholars who possess relevant views on el barrio. Los pinches bolillos have placed Chicanos in a position wherein a vast amount of social science literature needs reinterpretation. Consequently, two major Chicano social science journals have emerged: (1) El Grito: A Journal of Mexican-American Thought and (2) Aztlan: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts. These provide forums that specialize in criticizing the literature which distorts life in el barrio.

A CRITICISM OF THE FOCUS UPON ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is only one minority response to the American experience. The focus upon acculturation stems from the "melting pot" theory which holds that all ethnic groups eventually assimilate. However, America is not a "melting pot" in which all ethnic groups blend together to form a unified cultural group known as "Americans." The "melting pot" theory is currently out of vogue, and there are many groups which cannot assimilate. Though many of the European groups have assimilated, the predicament of minorities has always been an embarrassment to a democracy which claims

that "all are created equal." Blacks, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans have not experienced the same opportunities to acculturate that European Whites encountered. In fact, there exists much evidence to safely say that these minorities have been America's "undesirables."

Though there has been some recent immigration of Mexicans to the United States, most Mexican Americans have been here for generations. One must remember that over half of Mexico became part of the United States through annexation, conquest and purchase. Thus, in a sense Mexican Americans have always been here while other groups had to immigrate to these shores. The late George I. Sanchez put it more bluntly:

> We have to remember that this was New Spain and we did not ask the United States to come here; these people are at home. They're not immigrants in the sense that the Italians were immigrants or the Poles or the others. They are at home and therefore feel no compulsion to change. Whereas, the other immigrants, Italians and others felt that they had to become 150% Americans whereas we didn't. My people have been in the Southwest since the early 17th century. We belong here. We have no compulsion to give up our language, no compulsion to become completely gringoized. No, under no compulsion.[3]

Acculturation is becoming a minority response which is no longer functional for Chicanos, as if it ever really were. It is a false dream though there are still Chicanos who aspire to become White. We suggest that future studies focus not upon acculturation, but upon other Chicano responses. In an effort to combat racism a Chicano Movement has emerged which no longer stresses acculturation but emphasizes nationalism for Chicanos. If one wants to understand the social change taking place within the barrio today, one must turn toward analyzing nationalism as a survival tool for Chicanos.

CHICANO NATIONALISM: A DEVELOPING TREND

With the onset of the Civil Rights Movement and developing Black nationalism, Chicanos watched and learned. They have learned that there is nothing wrong with being ethnic plurals in a pluralistic society. They have also become conscious of their segregated role and their status as victims of a racist society. Thus, recently a general trend has developed to restore pride in la raza. Within the Chicano Movement a consciousness has emerged which seeks to restore the self image of Chicanos in the Southwest. That consciousness produced a general trend: nationalism.

Nationalism can be defined as ". . . a response to the atomization of society, a turn toward a new form of community to replace old communities which are in the process of being destroyed."[4] Kilson defines nationalism as a cultural renaissance to ". . . 'rediscover' cultural history . . . and has led to the construction of historical theories to demonstrate what is believed to have been the past as well as the present greatness."[5] Similarly, Hourani feels that nationalism arises "when this will (to work together) derives its content from the consciousness of solidarity, and the members of the group take as their common aim the preservation both of that consciousness and the characteristics on which it is based . . . ."[6]

One of the Chicano Movement's biggest advocates of nationalism as a unifying force for Chicanos is Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, head of the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado. Gonzales has been instrumental in popularizing the concept of "Aztlan" which refers to the land to the north of Mexico from whence the Aztecs migrated. Aztlan has become a symbol

of unification of all Chicanos into one social movement. Moreover, nationalism is the key to this unity. Gonzales spoke thusly in an interview:

> . . . it is my feeling that, first, of all, for self-preservation's sake that nationalism is expedient to Mexican American youth, that we have to identify with ourselves. We already have our identity, and we're rejecting it, and we should be holding fast to it. We should use this as a key for organization which other groups have used although they don't say it, profess it, or do they admit it, but it's used and it's a method of organization; it's a method of confrontation with the Establishment for change. The other area is cultural identity. The fact that we have so many cultural values that are important to living, as a human being, and not caught up in the materialistic, mechanical world of technology today that has nothing to do with people. We are concerned more with people than we are with things. I feel that the Mexicano youth has to identify with himself, find his own self-worth, work on developing his self-values, and when he does that, he can stand up and exist in any society.[7]

Thus, in response to the dominant system's failure to incorporate Mexican Americans into the mainstream of American life, and its efforts to keep Chicanos in an inferior status, Chicanos have created a general trend to counteract this. That trend is Chicano nationalism. The direction that this nationalism will take,will, in all probability, be efforts to establish oneself as plurals in a pluralistic society. This represents a new day for the Chicano because nationalism will stimulate organization, and organization will hopefully create a better place in the sun for Chicanos.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper I have avoided using the term assimilation. Instead I have used the term acculturation. I maintain that assimilation is a rare phenomenon among Chicanos because they may have all the qualifying characteristics for assimilation and yet not be fully accepted. Thus, I have used the term acculturation to reflect a process that falls short of full acceptance in American society.

Professor Loomis has noted that education is an important variable in the process of integration. The model herein presented also suggests that principal structural variables have a critical role in the acculturation process. However, educational achievement requires educational opportunities. Though there have been some changes in the educational sphere, there still remains long strides before the educational system is responsive to the needs of Chicanos.

Acculturation has been a difficult process for Chicanos and the status as an ethnic minority in American society has made the process even more difficult. For generations Chicanos have tried in vain to assimilate only to find that they could only achieve various stages of acculturation.

Professor Loomis maintains that America is changing. I am sure that it is, but I find it hard to believe when one can walk into a Colorado bar and find a sign that reads: "No dogs or Mexicans allowed." America might be changing, but it is changing all too slowly for a new generation of Chicanos.

Degrees of acculturation have undoubtedly occurred, but assimilation has been a rare occurrence for Chicanos. Today, many Chicano sociologists are highly critical of the acculturation-assimilation model. Rather, it is held that the barrio is an internal colony and that cultural pluralism is a more realistic Chicano response. Chicano nationalism is a trend in this direction. It represents a trend toward unity. Aztlan symbolizes this new identity. Of course Chicanos cannot get the whole Southwest back, but they can gain control of their own communities, i.e., La Raza Unida Party in Crystal City. Of course Chicanos cannot revolutionize the public schools, but they can create alternative institutions, i.e., Tlatelolco.

If there is to truely be a defense of integration, we must first change the inequities of the system. In the final analysis it is not a question of whether the Chicano Movement is advocating conflict or the resolution of conflict, but rather it is a question of whether the response of American society to social change will ignite one or the other.

NOTES

[1]A "primary positive link" refers to the link in which the negative chain is altered to a positive one.

[2]See Guzman's discussion of the literature written for social servic agencies in Ralph Guzman, Revised Bibliography (Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California, Graduate School of Business Administration, 1967), xvii-xviii.

[3]Interview by writer with Dr. George I. Sanchez for a KUHT educational television special, "Critical Issues: Who Speaks for the Mexican American?" (Houston, Texas: Community Services Television Project, March 9, 1969).

[4]R. Emerson, "Paradoxes of Asian Nationalism," in Immanuel Wallerstein, editor, Social Change: The Colonial Situation (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), 517.

[5]M. L. Kilson, Jr., "Nationalism and Social Classes in British West Africa," in Immanuel Wallerstein, editor, Social Change: The Colonial Situation (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), 541.

[6]A. Hourani, "Syria and Lebanon: Arab Nationalism," in Immanuel Wallerstein, editor, Social Change: The Colonial Situation (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), 553.

[7]Interview by writer with Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales for a KUHT educational television special, "Critical Issue: Who Speaks for the Mexican American?" (Houston, Texas: Community Services Television Project, March 9, 1969).